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Report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti

Summary

The present report contains the findings of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, based principally on its visit to Haiti in June 2010. The situation that has prevailed in Haiti following the devastating earthquake of 12 January has created an opportunity to rebuild the country with the help of the international community. The aim of the visit was to see how the economic and social situation had evolved on the ground and how international assistance to the country had permitted a transition from recovery to reconstruction, in line with the aid efficiency principles adopted at the Montreal Ministerial Preparatory Conference on Haiti, held on 25 January 2010, and endorsed at the International Donors' Conference "Towards a New Future for Haiti", held in New York on 31 March 2010. The present report contains recommendations highlighting the issues of the transition from recovery to reconstruction, the need for strengthened Haitian capacity and the requirement for effective, transparent funding mechanisms. It also stresses that the immediate recovery support needed by the population of Haiti should include job creation and education opportunities as part of the priority area of support for communities, including in rural areas. In addition, the Group calls for timely elections, which are essential for the political stability of Haiti and its economic and social development. The report includes recommendations addressed to the Haitian authorities and their international partners with a view to enhancing the impact of development assistance and ensuring the full and rapid disbursement of their pledges. While last year Haiti was at a crossroads, this year's devastating event means that the country now faces the possibility of a new beginning, provided that the international community keeps its promises of assistance.

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Programme of the visit of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group to Haiti, 16-19 June 2010 ....

I. Introduction

1. The present report is the sixth presented to the Economic and Social Council since the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti was reactivated in 2004. At that time, following a request made by the Government of Haiti, the Council decided by its resolution 2004/52 to reactivate the Group, which was established in 1999 to help coordinate the development of a long-term programme of assistance to the country. In accordance with Council decisions 2004/322 and 2009/211, the Group is composed of the Permanent Representatives of Benin, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Haiti, Peru, Spain and Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations. In addition, following a request made by El Salvador on 21 October 2009 (see E/2009/117), the Council decided to appoint the Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the United Nations as an additional member of the Group (decision 2009/267). Since its first meeting, on 23 November 2004, the Group has been chaired by the Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations. As stipulated in decision 2004/322, the President of the Economic and Social Council and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti are invited to take part in the Group's meetings.

2. By its resolution 2009/4, the Economic and Social Council decided to extend the mandate of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti until its substantive session of 2010 with a view to "following closely and providing advice on Haiti's long-term development strategy to promote socio-economic recovery and stability, with particular attention to the need to ensure coherence and sustainability in international support for Haiti, based on the long-term national development priorities, building upon the interim cooperation framework and the growth and poverty reduction strategy paper, and stressing the need to avoid overlap and duplication with respect to existing mechanisms". The Council also requested the Group to submit a report on its work, with recommendations, as appropriate, to the Council at its substantive session of 2010.

3. The present report is based largely on the findings of the Group as a result of its visit to Haiti from 16 to 19 June 2010. The devastating earthquake of 12 January forced the Group to adjust its working methods by submitting a report that does not follow the usual format. The Group followed the International Donors' Conference "Towards a New Future for Haiti", held in New York on 31 March 2010, and the World Summit for the Future of Haiti, held in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, on 2 June 2010, as well as the preparatory meetings held in Santo Domingo and Fort-de-France and the ministerial preparatory conference held in Montreal. It was only after this process that a visit of the Group to Haiti could be envisaged, with the aim of reviewing how the economic and social situation had evolved on the ground and how international assistance to the country had permitted a transition from recovery to reconstruction, in line with the aid efficiency principles adopted at the Montreal Ministerial Preparatory Conference on Haiti, held on 25 January 2010, and endorsed at the New York donor conference held two months later. In itself, the visit was a tribute to the resilience of the Haitian population and authorities, as well as the United Nations country team, key civil society representatives and international development partners on the ground, and was a demonstration of their capacity to overcome difficult situations while increasing efforts for the reconstruction of the country.

4. The members of the Group wish to express their profound gratitude to the Haitian authorities who gave of their time and made special efforts, in very difficult

circumstances, to organize the visit and to draw the conclusions and formulate the recommendations contained in the present report. The Group also wishes to express its appreciation for the open and constructive exchange with Haitian officials, including the President, René Préval; the Prime Minister and Minister for Planning and External Cooperation, Jean-Max Bellerive; the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Marie Michèle Rey; and other members of the Cabinet. In addition, the Group is grateful to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat for its constant and dedicated support for the work of the Group. Sincere thanks go also to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti and head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), Edmond Mulet; the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for the United Nations system in Haiti, Nigel Fisher; and their able team, as well as the whole United Nations country team, for their excellent support during the visit and for the valuable information and analysis provided during the numerous meetings organized for the Group.

5. The Group's very rich and intense programme in Haiti, which included interaction with relevant stakeholders and field visits to Les Cayes, is outlined in the annex to the present report. The success of this mission in difficult circumstances was due largely to the quality of the Group's interaction with those actors and with representatives of civil society, the private sector and the diplomatic and donor community, both in Port-au-Prince and outside the capital. The situation on the ground is extremely complex, and the numbers of actors involved makes it difficult to provide an exhaustive overview of all the activities and interactions that took place. Rather than attempting to be exhaustive with regard to the post-earthquake situation and the long-term development of Haiti, the Group wishes to highlight a select number of issues that it considers essential to bring to the Council's attention and upon which it has based its recommendations.

II. Relief, recovery and reconstruction: a difficult continuum calling for increased United Nations leadership

6. The magnitude and concentration of the earthquake's devastation makes Haiti a case study of the capacity of international actors to carry out a smooth transition from humanitarian assistance to recovery support while moving into the reconstruction phase. In point of fact, the situation on the ground has not yet allowed such a seamless process to take place.

7. The number of people affected is enormous — even more so when one considers the size of the country's population. According to the displacement tracking matrix established by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), as of late May 2010, there were some 1.6 million internally displaced persons in Haiti as a result of the earthquake, based in 1,342 sites, most of them in the area of Port-au-Prince. Upon visiting two camps in the city, the Group realized that the movement of persons and families between sites remained important and that, given the poor housing conditions in the city even before the earthquake, some people had chosen not to return to their neighbourhoods of origin, continuing to favour access to water, health-care services and cash-for-work or food-for-work programmes proposed to them in the camps by relief organizations. In that context, widespread

continued humanitarian assistance appears to be needed, while recovery itself is slow and the reconstruction phase is only in its planning stage.

8. This situation raises concerns as to the sustainability of the livelihoods of the affected populations, particularly as the peak of the hurricane season approaches. The vulnerability of many camps to flooding is of concern. The situation of women, who are vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence in an overcrowded, exposed environment, is particularly worrisome. It appears unavoidable that, over the longer term, some of the camps will become permanent settlements, prefiguring the shape of the city in future years.

9. The Group noted all the efforts made to improve the situation, to mitigate hardship in the camps and to provide transitional shelters. It is significant that the Haitian authorities have established a relocation commission. That being said, proper jobs and school and training opportunities will be the major factors driving people out of the camps and back to their communities to restart a normal life. Another issue that is vital to the improvement of the situation is large-scale rubble removal, a complex non-humanitarian issue with regard to which there is little expertise and capacity. Enhanced recovery measures to that end are urgently needed.

10. Thanks to its broad legitimacy, close working relations with the Government and with humanitarian and development communities at large, and its long-standing presence in the country, the United Nations has a strong role to play in advocating these recovery efforts and mobilizing all international actors during the transition phase. **The Group recommends that full use be made of the capacity of the United Nations to mobilize international efforts and aid, and that the Organization's leadership role in that respect be recognized and promoted on the ground.** Such leadership, in support of the Government's efforts, would greatly help to accelerate progress and to prevent a stagnation of efforts, which would be detrimental to the stability and long-term development of the country.

III. The electoral process in Haiti: an illustration of the nexus between political stability and socio-economic recovery

11. The forthcoming presidential, legislative and municipal elections were a source of concern for numerous interlocutors. The Group noted the repeated reference to that issue in its interactions with representatives from the political and economic spheres. For many, the electoral climate will determine the likelihood of carrying out a meaningful recovery and reconstruction process in the year to come.

12. While the political process is crucial to the short- and medium-term stability of Haiti, the gravity of the situation on the ground and the obvious need to accelerate efforts in order to improve people's living conditions require that political rivalries not undermine the recovery of the country. In that respect, the Group had an enlightening meeting with Mr. Claude Moise, a reputable academic who has presided over the Commission set up by President Préval to formulate proposals for long-awaited constitutional reforms.

13. The economic and social development of Haiti relies in great part on free and fair elections. Since the Group's visit, President Préval has issued a decree setting the dates for the planned elections, a positive step towards the timely organization of the ballots. However, all should remain vigilant with respect to the evolution of

this process. Political ambitions and aspirations will be ever more acute, as public action will be facilitated by new sources of international funding. **The Group therefore calls for a high degree of responsibility on the part of all actors in order to lead the electoral process to a positive end and to avoid any disruption in the recovery and reconstruction process.** The Group also commends MINUSTAH, the Organization of American States, and other actors for their technical support for and political guidance of this process.

IV. New mechanisms for the reconstruction of Haiti: an opportunity for donor alignment with national priorities

14. On 17 June 2010, while the Group was in Haiti, the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission held its first meeting. The Commission, composed of both Haitian and foreign personalities and co-chaired by Prime Minister Bellerive and former United States President Bill Clinton, is aimed at the coordinated planning and implementation of reconstruction activities in support of Haitian priorities. The establishment of the Commission is a positive development, as it demonstrates the common willingness of many stakeholders to move forward in a coordinated and transparent way.

15. As a result of its discussions with the Prime Minister and with donors, the Group is of the view that the Commission should not only focus on the approval of projects, but also provide a forum for strategic thinking regarding the reconstruction process, with a view to creating a new paradigm for the development of Haiti in support of the Government's vision of "building back better". The Commission should therefore allow for the greater visibility of and support for national development priorities, a legitimate request too often sidelined in the past. The success of the Commission will depend on its capacity to launch well-thought-out initiatives on the basis of a clear plan, whether funded by the Haiti Reconstruction Fund or through other bilateral or multilateral channels. As stressed by Prime Minister Bellerive, the Government's Action Plan for the Reconstruction and National Development of Haiti, presented to the 31 March donor conference, is certainly a valuable approach that needs to be framed within a more structured Haitian vision of the future.

16. Technically, the Haiti Reconstruction Fund has been established. However, further work is required on the operating methods and procedures that will apply; the specific role to be played by the World Bank, the fiscal agent for the Fund; and the overhead costs involved in the use of this mechanism. The pooled funds, emanating from donors and channelled through implementing agencies (namely, ministries, United Nations organizations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the Inter-American Development Bank, as well as non-governmental organizations and the private sector), should be subject to minimal transaction fees, rather than the 10 per cent minimum estimated in some of the initial scenarios. So far, few contributions to the fund have been announced. The risk of underutilizing this mechanism will be real if acceptable and relevant procedures are not established.

17. For the Group, it is important that the complexity of these mechanisms not slow down the delivery of reconstruction assistance to the country or jeopardize the aid effectiveness principles established at donor meetings. The recent history of Haiti is full of ambitious development projects that have not been implemented

because of a lack of capacity. **Bearing this in mind, the Haitian authorities and their development partners should make every effort to ensure the efficient functioning of the Commission and the Fund, with maximum guarantees that funding will be used to produce concrete outcomes.**

18. Haiti does not suffer from a lack of non-governmental organizations — quite the contrary. This sometimes leads to counterproductive initiatives. On several occasions during its visit, the Group was informed of the concerns of several interlocutors, including Prime Minister Bellerive, about actions taken by a number of such organizations outside the scope of the recovery and reconstruction plans set out by the Government and its partners. **The Group would like to emphasize the importance of working within the framework of the Government's Action Plan for the Reconstruction and National Development of Haiti, in coordination with the representatives of the main non-governmental organizations, and calls on Member States to urge their national non-governmental organizations present in Haiti to work in accordance with the established Haitian priorities.**

19. **The Group recommends the use by all partners, including non-governmental organizations, of the aid tracking portal established by the Government and the United Nations Development Programme.** This mechanism, which was recommended by the Group in its previous reports to the Council, is a welcome tool for ensuring transparency in development support and to promote the strengthening of national institutions.

V. Strengthening Haitian capacities: now or never

20. The Haitian State apparatus and its personnel were severely affected by the earthquake of 12 January. What was already considered to be a particularly weak State has been further destabilized. In Haiti, the Group witnessed how the staff of various ministries had to share offices, given the shortage of Government buildings, in order to ensure the continuity of service. The courage and commitment of those civil servants deserve to be highlighted and praised.

21. In such a difficult environment, international assistance is often a delicate issue, as it can compete with national structures, whether public or private, and further marginalize them. Yet, if adequately implemented, aid can be an excellent lever for local institutions. From that perspective, Haiti is at a crossroads: the level of funding pledged for reconstruction is unprecedented for the country. The reconstruction of ministries and other public buildings in the affected areas will open the way for a qualitative leapfrog in terms of services provided to the population. The Group is of the view that the conditions for the genuine long-term, well-planned development of the governmental apparatus now exist and that this opportunity should be seized.

22. In order to translate that opportunity into concrete progress, the ministries and the donor community should ensure that strong, renewed relations based on trust are established, building on the progress that the Group witnessed and reported on last year. The ministries should therefore be closely involved in the work of the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission and should be encouraged to present projects to the Reconstruction Fund, which would also strengthen Haitians' ownership of their country's development. **The Commission and the Fund could also determine a certain percentage of projects and related funding that could be directly**

implemented by the Haitian authorities, with a commensurate level of support provided for capacity-building through the training and mentoring of civil servants. The long-standing and systematic use of non-governmental organizations for project implementation, particularly as it relates to basic services provided to the population, should be replaced by a systematic attempt to strengthen Haitian capacities, a condition for the sustainability of development efforts.

23. Haitian capacities must be strengthened both in Port-au-Prince and in the rest of the country, which accounts for two thirds of the Haitian population. As indicated by several interlocutors in the capital as well as in Les Cayes, the main city in the South Department, which the Group also visited, the current situation is an opportunity both to reduce the geographical concentration of State institutions, with a view to increasing access to administrative services for the population, and to decentralize political and economic structures in order to create new opportunities for the development of the country. Currently, for example, passports are issued only in Port-au-Prince.

24. The Group is aware that it will be difficult to decentralize partially existent Government structures and services and that improved working relationships need to be developed between regional departmental officials, mayors and parliamentarians in order to build efficient decision-making processes at the local level. In addition to the need for a "deconcentration" of administrative offices, there is a need for the construction of infrastructures to boost economic activity and for the creation of new higher-education and medical institutions, which are required if Haiti is to embark on a different path.

25. As indicated by several interlocutors, internally displaced persons who left Port-au-Prince after the earthquake have begun to return in order to take advantage of improved job and education opportunities, placing additional pressure on a city that is already overwhelmed. **The Group therefore recommends that special efforts be made to ensure that decentralization is accorded sustained priority and that international organizations strengthen their offices in the provinces with a view to assisting local development efforts.**

26. Another important aspect of the strengthening of national institutions is the integration of disaster preparedness into capacity-building activities at the local and national levels, across sectoral ministries. The Group was encouraged to hear from the Director-General of the Civil Protection Directorate about the progress made in this area within Haitian institutions. However, the Group notes a major difference between the amount of funds allocated for national emergency preparedness in Haiti and the substantial international capacity for emergency response. There are encouraging signs of coordinated efforts by international organizations, especially within the United Nations system, to support Haitian authorities in the field of emergency preparedness. Sustained efforts are even more crucial on the eve of the hurricane season and as threats of seismic shocks remain present.

VI. Coherence and coordination of United Nations efforts

27. The coordinated efforts of the United Nations system, an issue of special interest to the Economic and Social Council, were the central focus of the Group's visit to Haiti. The Council's informal event entitled "Transition from relief to

development: lessons learned from the experience in Haiti" touched on this issue; the present report will address the subject only briefly.

28. While the post-disaster needs assessment presented at the New York conference attested to the capacity of the United Nations system to act promptly in a coordinated manner, the Group also witnessed close collaboration among international organizations in the humanitarian cluster system, with each cluster led by a part of the United Nations system or, in the case of the shelter cluster, by IOM. However, **the Group noted the need for increased interaction and collaboration among clusters.**

29. As we move into the recovery and reconstruction phases, it is to be expected that the views of humanitarian organizations will differ from those of organizations focusing on longer-term development needs, for example, in the areas of housing and urban planning, given the concomitant needs for continued support for displaced populations and for "building back better" for the longer term. **Therefore, the Group once again calls on the United Nations system to play a strong leadership role on transition issues, making full use of the multiple competencies existing throughout the system.**

30. **The Group was pleased to hear about the 12 joint projects submitted simultaneously by the United Nations country team to the Haiti Reconstruction Fund, with a budget of more than $200 million, and encourages this practice.** That being said, the United Nations system would gain from further clarification regarding the roles and responsibilities of its high-level representatives. The various roles of former United States President Clinton, for example, as United Nations Special Envoy for Haiti, Co-Chair of the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission and leader of various fund-raising initiatives, including through the Clinton Foundation, strongly attest to his deep commitment to improving the situation in Haiti. Further clarifications as to the implications of those different mandates would enhance the situation and help to prevent possible misunderstandings within the United Nations system. **This aspect deserves to be clarified for the understanding of all, in particular the Haitian population.**

VII. Conclusion

31. More than ever, the Group considers it imperative that Haiti remain on the international agenda and that appropriate support be provided to the country, in particular through a strong United Nations presence on the ground in the form of MINUSTAH and the United Nations country team, in Port-au-Prince as well in other vulnerable areas of the country. The Group firmly supports further renewals of the current mandate of MINUSTAH in order to ensure and consolidate stability and security in Haiti. The Group welcomes the work accomplished by the United Nations in recent months, following the tragic loss of many of its staff, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti, Hedi Annabi, and the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Luiz Carlos da Costa, who perished in the tragedy.

32. In conclusion, the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti wishes to reaffirm the interest and commitment of all delegations that are part of the Group as regards the improvement of the situation in Haiti. The very productive visit paid to the country last month attests to that commitment. Members of the Group are confident that the

Council will follow the Group's recommendations and continue to provide support to Haiti, a country that is in such dire need of it.

33. The Group also takes this opportunity to stress the need for all countries that have pledged funds for Haiti to disburse them fully and rapidly, and to maintain their commitment. Haiti requires our continued attention and support. This is all the more important because the country has already slipped from the headlines and relies, today more than ever, on international mechanisms and institutions, including the Economic and Social Council, to maintain close collaboration with the international community at large. The coming months will be decisive for Haiti as the country, which remains extremely fragile, makes the transition from recovery to reconstruction. As a result, the Group reiterates its appeal to international stakeholders to work with the Government of Haiti and to consider increasing their support. It welcomes the continued diversification of partners, including through South-South cooperation.

Annex

Programme of the visit of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group to Haiti, 16-19 June 2010

Wednesday, 16 June

13.00	Arrival at Toussaint Louverture International Airport
14.30	Meeting with Mrs. Marie Michèle Rey, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
16.45	Meeting with the United Nations country team, chaired by Deputy Special Representative Nigel Fisher (MINUSTAH logistics base)
19.30	Working dinner hosted by Special Representative Edmond Mulet, with Deputy Special Representative Fisher and Ms. Rebecca Grynspan, Deputy Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Thursday, 17 June

07.00	Visit to Les Cayes (by helicopter): – Meeting with United Nations officials, local authorities and the departmental Civil Protection Directorate – Meeting with civil society organizations (Chamber of Commerce, local non-governmental organizations) – Working lunch
15.30	Briefing by MINUSTAH Electoral Assistance Section (MINUSTAH logistics base)
16.00	Meeting with Mr. Claude Moise, Adviser to the President on constitutional reform (MINUSTAH logistics base)
17.00	Briefing by Mr. Jean-Christophe Adrian, Country Programme Manager, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (MINUSTAH logistics base)
19.00	Working dinner with Deputy Special Representative Fisher and United Nations country team members

Friday, 18 June

08.30	Meeting with representatives of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Food Programme, UNDP and IOM (MINUSTAH logistics base)

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10.00	Meeting with Mrs. Marie Alta Jean-Baptiste, Director-General, Civil Protection Directorate (MINUSTAH logistics base)
12.00	Meeting with Mr. René Garcia Préval, President of the Republic (Presidential Palace)
15.00	Meeting with Mr. Jean-Max Bellerive, Prime Minister and Minister for Planning and External Cooperation, and members of the Group of 11 (donors) (Office of the Prime Minister)
18.30	Cocktails with the diplomatic corps and civil society representatives, hosted by the Ambassador of Canada

Saturday, 19 June

08.15	Briefing by IOM on internally displaced persons and the camp coordination and camp management cluster (MINUSTAH logistics base)
09.00	Visit to camps
11.30	Debriefing with Deputy Special Representative Fisher (MINUSTAH logistics base)
14.00	Departure for New York